

# Who Has Diabetes?

Antoinette M. Holt, M.P.H.  
ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center

## Nationally

According to the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, there are currently 17 million people who suffer from diabetes. That means 6.2 % of the total population of the United States have diabetes. Of these numbers, 11.1 million have been diagnosed, and 5.9 million do not even know that they have it. The death rate actually shows the severity of diabetes and how the disease is impacting the United States. In 2001, diabetes ranked as the sixth leading cause of death. In 2001, data indicated that a record number of 71,252 people die annually of diabetes. In Indiana, 1,668 residents died from diabetes in 2001.

## Definition

Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both. Diabetes can be associated with serious complications and premature death, but people with diabetes can take measures to reduce the likelihood of such occurrences.

## The Types of Diabetes

- **Type 1** usually occurs in younger individuals, rapid onset, the pancreas is unable to produce insulin in the beta cells and the individual must take insulin.
- **Type 2** usually seen in older individuals with a gradual onset, the pancreas is still making insulin, but at reduced levels.
- **Gestational** diabetes occurs during pregnancy and places the woman at higher risk for type 2 diabetes.

## Race and Ethnicity

Clinic-based reports and regional studies indicate that type 2 diabetes is becoming more common among American Indians, African Americans, and Hispanics and Latinos. National prevalence data indicate:

- Whites: 11.4 million people. 7.8% of all non-Hispanic whites have diabetes.
- Blacks: 2.8 million people. 13% of all non-Hispanic blacks have diabetes. On average, Blacks are 2 times more likely to have diabetes than whites of similar age.
- Hispanic/Latinos: 2 million people. 10.2% of all Hispanic/Latino Americans have diabetes. On average, Hispanic/Latino Americans are 1.9 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites of similar age. Mexican Americans, the largest Hispanic/Latino subgroup, are 2 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites of similar age. Similarly, residents of Puerto Rico are 2 times more likely to have diagnosed diabetes than U.S. non-Hispanic whites.

- American Indians and Alaska Natives who receive care from the Indian Health Service (IHS): 105,000 people. 15.1% of American Indians and Alaska Natives receiving care from Indiana Health Services have diabetes. At the regional level, diabetes is least common among Alaska Natives (5.3%) and most common among American Indians in the southeastern United States (25.7%) and in certain tribes from the Southwest. On average, American Indians and Alaska Natives are 2.6 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites of similar age.
- Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders: Prevalence data for diabetes among Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders are limited. Some groups within these populations are at increased risk for diabetes. For example, data collected from 1996 to 2000 suggest that Native Hawaiians are 2.5 times more likely to have diagnosed diabetes than white residents of Hawaii of similar age.

In Indiana, the 2001 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey asked “**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TOLD BY A DOCTOR THAT YOU HAD DIABETES**”. Of those responding, 5.9% of whites said yes, 11.7% of Blacks said yes, and 9.7% of Hispanics said yes.

Diabetes ranked third in the top 5 leading causes of death among blacks in Indiana in 2001.

### **Age:**

- Age 65 years or older: 6.3 million. 18.4% of all people in this age group have diabetes.
- Age 20 years or older: 15.6 million. 8.2% of all people in this age group have diabetes.
- Under age 20: About 151,000 persons less than 20 years of age have diabetes. This represents 0.19% of all people in this age group. Approximately one in every 400 to 500 children and adolescents has type 1 diabetes.

As shown, diabetes is becoming a growing epidemic. There are currently legislations, programs, and projects that the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is involved in and that may serve as valuable resources. For more information, visit the ISDH web site at [www.in.gov/isdh/programs/diabetes/splash.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/diabetes/splash.htm).

### **Health Conference**

The ISDH will be sponsoring a health conference that targets managing diabetes.

This free health conference, “Too Sweet For Your Own Good”, will be held Saturday, November 15, in Indianapolis. By attending this conference, individuals with diabetes or those with loved ones with diabetes can learn how to manage the disease and protect their health.

## References

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